



Department of Emergency Preparedness

FACT SHEET

What the Public Needs to Know About Hurricanes

Tropical cyclones are an organized system of clouds and thunderstorms with a defined circulation. Cyclones with maximum sustained winds of 38 mph (61 kph) or less are called "tropical depressions." Once the tropical cyclone reaches winds of at least 39 mph (63 kph) they are typically called a "tropical storm" and assigned a name. If maximum sustained winds reach 74 mph (119 kph), the cyclone is called a hurricane. Hurricanes are severe storms with dangerous winds and heavy rains. Hurricanes are ranked on a scale of 1-5 ("5" is the most dangerous) based on wind speed and storm surge.

Hurricane season is from June 1-November 30. Hurricanes can happen outside of these months, but most, 97%, fall within the season. Hurricanes are most active in early to mid-September.

What does this mean to Frederick County residents?

Although Frederick County is not at high risk for hurricanes, residents may experience other dangers including high winds, heavy rains, flooding, and tornados.

What are Frederick County Public Safety Officials doing to prepare?

Public safety officials monitor all hazards which may potentially cause danger to the community. Officials collaborate, plan, train and exercise together on a routine basis to provide optimum emergency responses to best ensure community safety.

Preparing for a hurricane

- Stay informed on when weather conditions may start to threaten public safety.
- Obtain additional information from the Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) Agency at www.fema.gov and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Hurricane Center at www.nhc.noaa.gov.
- Identify potential home hazards and know how to secure and protect them before a hazard occurs.
- Know details of homeowners' insurance coverage. Inquire through the insurance agent or review the National Flood Insurance Program guidance at www.floodsmart.gov.
- Locate and secure important papers, such as insurance policies, Social Security cards, wills, licenses, stocks, etc. Store them in a flood safe location or safe deposit box.
- Prepare or refresh home emergency kits. Kits should include food, water, medical supplies, battery-operated radio or NOAA Weather Radio, extra

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batteries, flashlights, and other items to support families for three days. Include provisions for pets.

- Update emergency communications plans. Include out-of-town contacts and locations to reunite if you become separated. Be sure all family members know home, work, and cell phone numbers and how to call 9-1-1.

After the storm

- Stay informed by listening to the radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio.
- Obey road closure warnings. **“Turn Around, Don’t Drown.”**
- Be alert for downed power lines, broken glass, and damage to building foundations, streets, bridges, and soil erosion.
- Check home water, gas and electrical services, and appliances for damage.
- If there is a power failure, use a flashlight. Do not use candles or open flames indoors.
- When using a generator, adhere to manufacturers’ instructions and standard electrical code.
- Do not drink tap water until it is safe to do so.
- Report property damage to home insurance carrier.

How will public safety officials communicate with the public before, during and after an emergency?

Keeping the public informed of any hazardous situation is a high priority of emergency preparedness partners. Citizens can maintain their awareness of when threatening weather conditions are forecast through the local radio or television media, or by acquiring a NOAA Weather Radio, which can alert citizens when warnings are issued by the National Weather Service.

Emergency messages will be broadcast WFMD 930 AM, WFRE 99.9 FM, WAFY KEY 103.1 FM, Frederick County Government TV (FCG-TV) channel 19, Frederick County Public Schools TV channel 18, City of Frederick channel 99, and NBC 25 WHAG TV.

Where can the public obtain more information?

For detailed information on how to prepare for hurricanes, view the preparedness tips on the Frederick County Government preparedness website at www.co.frederick.md.us/emergency or call the Frederick County Department of Emergency Preparedness at 301-600-1746 or via e-mail at EmergencyManagement@fredco-md.net.